



HOME SECURITY

Chesterfield County Police Department, Crime Prevention Unit (804) 318 - 8699

Nationally, one home is burglarized every 14.3 seconds. Homeowners often don't realize it, but there are things they are doing, or not doing, that make their home attractive to burglars. Criminals are opportunists who seek to exploit physical, structural or procedural weaknesses. If a homeowner gets careless or doesn't take crime prevention seriously, he or she risks becoming a victim.

There are numerous measures that homeowners can take to help reduce opportunity crime and secure their property. Additionally, the Chesterfield County Police Department offers free home security assessments to homeowners. The assessment takes approximately an hour and homeowners are provided with written security recommendations. To schedule an assessment contact the Crime Prevention Unit at (804) 318-8699.

Outdoor Security

- Clearly display your home's address with minimum four-inch tall reflective numbers so police and emergency services can locate your home quickly.
- As a burglary deterrent, post an alarm sign at the end of the driveway (at the road). Include alarm decals on all exterior doors as well. Even if the home is not alarmed, the impression of security can be enough to ward off would-be offenders. However, for monitoring and security purposes, the police department always encourages installation of audible intrusion detection systems.
- Keep yard free of items that offenders can use as burglary tools. Examples include: bricks, pavers, landscape border materials, rocks, tools, ladders, ceramic pots, sculptures, etc.
- Keep shrubs trimmed below three-feet in height to facilitate visibility and help deny concealment opportunities. Raise tree canopies at least six-feet above grade to ensure clear sightlines to the home from the street and surrounding properties.
- Utilize motion-activated flood lights on all sides of the home to help detect nighttime activity and illuminate your property.
- Use photocell sensors to illuminate all exterior doors, including those on freestanding garages, from dusk to dawn.
- Keep spare keys with a trusted friend or neighbor and not outdoors. Criminals know where to find "hidden" keys!
- Always keep your car doors locked and never leave valuables such as cash, a purse, GPS unit, iPod, camera or laptop computer in your vehicle.
- Make sure your property is well-maintained and your house has a "lived in" appearance at all times.



Exterior Doors

- Install solid core, metal clad exterior and interior garage doors for greatest penetration resistance.
- Keep exterior doors locked via deadbolt locks at all times.

- Install deadbolt locks with one-inch throw bolts on all exterior doors as well as doors separating garages from home interiors.
- Secure deadbolt strike plates with three-inch screws for increased penetration resistance.
- Secure sliding glass doors by installing charley bars or by placing a dowel rod in the lower track.
- Consider security film for large expanses of glass or for glass adjacent to door locks in order to increase penetration resistance. See examples at www.llumar.com and www.vista-films.com.
- To prevent sliding doors from being lifted off their tracks and out of the frame from the outside, install pan head screws into the upper track of the moveable door. Screws, installed approximately two-feet apart, should not allow the door to be lifted from the track and should not impede the door's function.
- Place wide-angle peepholes in all solid panel exterior doors.
- While closed, drill a hole in the garage door's track and install a pin or padlock to prevent the door from moving along the track. If a pin is chosen, it should be sturdy enough to withstand considerable pressure.

Windows

- Draw first floor curtains/blinds at night and when away from home to prevent valuables from being seen.
- Keep all windows closed and latched when away from home.
- Install window pins on all ground floor double hung wood windows. Window pinning kits are available at hardware stores.
- Secure window air conditioning units from the inside by attaching a bar to the unit that extends past both sides of the window frame to prevent the units from being removed to gain entry.

Security When Away From Home

- Before you leave, verify that all windows and doors are closed and locked (via deadbolt lock).
- Use at least two light timers (one per floor in a two-story home or in different areas of a single-story home) that turn on and off in a logical sequence to provide the appearance of occupancy.
- Leave a loud radio on, tuned to talk radio, to increase the illusion of occupancy.
- Stop mail and newspaper deliveries or have a trusted neighbor pick them up.
- Keep a neighbor's vehicle intermittently parked in your driveway to bolster the appearance that someone is home.
- Ask a trusted neighbor to tend to your yard and watch the house when you are away.
- Don't leave descriptive answering machine messages that reveal your plans. For example: "You've reached the Smith's ... we're away for Christmas ... please leave a message."
- Schedule a vacation "keep check" with the police department to have a patrol unit check in on your home while you are out of town. For more details and to request your keep check, call (804) 748-1258.

